

THE RIVAL PREACHERS.

Rev. Jehosaphat Hobbs Has a Difficultly with Brother Strawfoot.

How They Battered Over the Funeral Sermon—Mighty Doings Before the Licker Was Spilt.

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One in the far removed community of "Possum Trot" was better known or more highly respected than Old Cado Minks. He had never held office, had never killed any one, had never been director general at the hanging of a horse-thief, and had never attempted any sort of social reform, and yet he was placed upon a high hill of esteem. But there was a reason for this. Old Cado owned a distillery. He made the blazing apple-brandy and the colorless whisky known as "white mule," and in that community money may be respected as a kind of side show, but whisky is the circus. A wreath of tender regard may surround a fast horse, but a chaplet of love is placed upon the brow of "licker." No wonder, then, that Old Cado held so warm a place in the hearts of his countrymen.

One day the neighborhood was profoundly stirred upon learning that Cado's wife was dead. What a positive joy it was for the women that went to the house to offer their assistance; what a pleasure it was to the men that stood about whittling the rail fence and casting anxious glances toward the house to see if Cado were coming with the jug.

When the time for the funeral came, there arrived two important characters, parsons Hobbs and Strawfoot. They were not of the conventional cloth, having merely taken out exhorters' licenses from the county court, which granted them the privilege of "whooping it up" at camp meetings, but also giving them the right, upon a pinch, to preach funeral sermons.

Hobbs was short and fat; Strawfoot was tall and lean. Hobbs followed when he talked; Strawfoot wheezed like a dry pump.

"What did you come here for?" Hobbs asked, turning to Strawfoot.

"I come here to preach this here funeral," Strawfoot answered.

"Wall, now, you may preach all you want, but you shan't put in your hooks until I get through."

"We'll see about that; I come here to preach this here sermon an' I'm goin' to do it or see a mighty plain reason why writ up on the wall."

"Oh, don't you fret about the reason. It will be writ plain enough."

"That mout be, but you kaint write it."

"I reckon I kin for I have writ a good many things in my time. I've writ things that would make you bat yo' eyes."

"Come, parsons," said an old man, leaving off his whittling and addressing the exhorters, "don't start a jower here. Old Cado is sore afflicted, an' it will tech him mightily in the quick to see you quarrellin' as to who shall preach his wife's funeral. It don't make no difference who preaches it so it's



WHAT DID YOU COME HERE FOR?

preached, an' I reckon one of you kin preach it as well as the other. Hush, now, all hands. Here comes Cado with the jug."

The old distiller gave each eager man a drink and then as he placed the jug under a tree, remarked:

"I loved to myselt just now that hearn somebody a jowerin'."

"Yes," Hobbs answered, "it war Strawfoot."

"Beg yo' pardon," said Strawfoot, "it war you. Brother Cado, I come here to preach yo' wife's funeral, but this feller lous I shan't."

"What was that you called me?"

"I didn't call you nothin', but I stand here flat footed an' say that I aint goin' to be beat out of my just rights by no fly up the creek. That's what I say. You can't preach no how."

"The deuce I can't. I'll leave it to the crowd if I can't preach all round you, three times out of fo'."

"Shucks, feller, I kin preach the socks offen you."

"Ah, but you didn't do it down at the spout spring. I fotch up three mourners an' you didn't git none."

"Oh, yes, you got three, but who was they? One was yo' son-in-law an' the other two was fellers that are courtin' yo' gals, an' repot do say that you give yo' son-in-law—and a wus knock-kneed human critter I never seen—a side of bacon to go up."

"Hol' on now, parsons," said Cado, "it don't make no difference who preaches the funeral. Both of you kin preach well enough an' carry one of you kin preach to hurt, so what is the use of mowlin' about it. To tell you both the honest truth, I think it's licker you want, which I am puffed up with to give, so the one that will agree not to preach may have this here jug."

Both men made a lunge for the jug. "Hold on here," exclaimed Hobbs, "you air goin' to preach the funeral."

"No, you air," cried Strawfoot. "You have been intendin' to do it longer than I have. Gimme this licker."

"Won't do it, for it's mine. I kaint preach as well as you kin, an' you know it."

"O! yes you kin. You kin preach me bald-headed any day. Turn loose this jug."

"Hold on now, parsons—jest wait a minit. This aint no way to act on such an occasion. I jest wanted to find out the best preacher, so I kin git him to do the work, for the man that do preach the Word over my wife is goin' to git fo' gallons of the best licker I've got."

"I'm the best," yelled Hobbs, turning loose the jug.

"No he aint!" howled Strawfoot.

"That it is again," said the old man.

"We aint no closer to a settlement than we was at fust. I know it's a mighty odd thing to do at a funeral, but I've got a proposition to make. Now, I like both of you about the same and want to do the far thing. How air you on the rattle?"

"What do you mean by that?" Strawfoot asked.

"Why, I mean to give this funeral to the man that kin fling the other one down the best three outen five."

"But the folks would all declar us heathens if we was to do sich a thing," Hobbs protested.

"All right, then. Let Strawfoot do the preachin'."

"No, I won't agree to that."

"Wall, then you'll batter rattle."

"I aint no rattler," said Strawfoot.

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MINT DIRECTOR LEECH.

HE IS INTERVIEWED BY OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT.

Interesting and Instructive Information Regarding the Coins of the United States—The Excellence of the American Alloys—England's Antiquated Mint.

(Special Correspondence.)

WASHINGTON, June 20.—For a month or more congress has excited itself and interested the country with its agitation of silver. After listening to innumerable speeches on the desirability or the danger of remonetization of the white metal, it was an agreeable relief to go over to the treasury department and sit down and talk about silver and gold with one who knows the technique as well as the principles of money making, and who also has some idea of associating the fine arts with the mechanical operations of coining. Director of the Mint Leech is a man who has grown up amid the jingle of coin. Eighteen years of service have only intensified his love for his profession, and an hour's conversation with him is like skimming the cream off two decades of thought. His observation of the money question, his respect for very anxious to secure passage by congress of an act authorizing the director of the mint to change the designs of Uncle Sam's coins.

"Our coins should be artistic and characteristic," said Mr. Leech. "The designs now in use are not artistic. If we are going to increase our coinage of silver dollars we should have a better design than the Philadelphia school marm. We used to have a classical Liberty head, borrowed from France, but she has disappeared. If you want to see the difference between an artistic coin and an inartistic one, get a French silver franc and compare it with the young woman on one of our silver dollars. As for the eagle on the other side of our dollar, it is not at all an heroic bird. It looks as much like a buzzard as anything else. The suggestion has been made that on our new silver dollar we place a portrait of Washington, and one idea is that it be an equestrian picture. This would certainly make a beautiful design, strong and striking; the objection to it being that with a horse the portrait could not be made as perfect as if the whole of the coin were taken up with the head. But I do not think this a valid objection, for the reason that portraiture is no longer desirable on coins."

"Several novel suggestions have been made in reference to a new design for the silver dollars," continued Mr. Leech. "One was that we make one die containing a map of the state of Maine, another of New Hampshire, another of Vermont, and so on until we had dies of all the states and territories in the Union, these to be used in equal proportions in the coinage of the fu-



E. O. LEECH.

ture. The idea in this is that the coins will thus be made of educational value in teaching the masses something about the geography of their country. I need scarcely add that I do not favor making a geographical text book of the silver dollar. Another suggestion, and a more artistic one, is that we use portraits of all the prominent men of our history, stamping a few millions in honor of one man and a few millions in honor of another till all have been thus used."

"There are living men who think themselves great enough to adorn the silver dollar. This suggestion was made to me by a certain member of congress—that we put upon the new silver dollar portraits of ten or a dozen of the most conspicuous champions of remonetization of silver. He thought this would be a graceful and artistic recognition of their services, and, of course, he expected to be one of the honorable dozen. I don't think this plan will be adopted. The seals of the various states, outline pictures of the Capitol, the Washington monument and other public buildings have been suggested."

"The most novel suggestion which has yet reached this office concerning a design for the silver dollar is an outgrowth of the prevailing passion for pictures of pretty women. The man who offered this plan was a photographer in New York, who said he had been at work for some years making a collection of photographs of the beautiful women of America. He wanted us to take his photographs, several thousand in number, have a composite picture made of them all and use the result as the sum and essence of American beauty and the ideal head of Liberty. I admire pretty women as much as any one, but I don't think this plan will do. In choosing a design for a silver dollar we can hardly afford to go into competition with the makers of cigarette pictures. My admiration for the beauty of American woman is so great, and my desire to improve our coins so keen, that I want first of all to get rid of the Philadelphia school marm on the dollar and then of the young woman from Arkansas sitting on a bale of cotton on the half dollar and quarter. Another design that could be dispensed with to advantage is the Indian on the penny. The law says the design on the face of the penny shall typify liberty, but I cannot see the relation between liberty and the head of an Indian, for the Indian has very few liberties now-a-days, and the more he has the less the people like it."

"Which nation, in your opinion, has the prettiest coins?"

"I like the German coins better than any other, though the French and English are both artistic. There is one good thing about the German coins—they have raised letters running about on the periphery. This interferes with the practice, which is more common in this country than most people suppose, of drilling into a coin and taking out the gold."

"All right. Why didn't we think of that before?"

"They climbed out and went to the house. The place was deserted. They looked at each other and then, looking down the road, saw the people coming back from the burying-ground."

OTIE P. READ.

As with them is to send them to the mints for reminting, the owner being paid their exact value. With raised letters on the periphery drilling is very likely to be discovered; but the objection to the raised letters is that they cause the coin to abrade much more rapidly than it would otherwise."

"What is the cost of coining a silver dollar?"

"A little less than one and one-half cents. When the law directed us, some years ago, to coin silver trade dollars we estimated that they would cost about a cent apiece. But the expense has been more than that, and was very nearly up to a cent and a half. Probably we have the finest mints in the world. A friend of mine, who had been superintendent of the mint at San Francisco, is now in Europe. Here is a letter which I have just received from him, telling of his visit to the Royal mint of London. If there is any mint in the world in which one would expect to find the finest machinery and most perfect methods it is the Royal mint, and yet my friend writes me that he was astonished at what he saw in that establishment. They are there at least one hundred years behind us, using clumsy old machinery long since discarded in this country. Probably the expense of coining is twice as great there as here. The only thing in which they excel us is an automatic weighing machine which weighs the coins and runs them along at a very rapid rate. Our weighing is all done by women, and I suppose if we should attempt to introduce the automatic machine a great wall of lamentations would proceed from our weighers. To show you how welded to their idols the British coiners are I will mention the fact that our alloy of gold is now the model for all the principal nations, England alone excepted. On the continent of Europe they took a lot of our gold coins and the coins of other countries and put them in a barrel or some sort of shaker and shook them up for a few hours and then took them out and weighed them carefully. Our coins had suffered much less abrasion than any of the others and our alloys were thereupon adopted by the continental nations."

"What coins are our mints now turning out?"

"The silver dollar still takes the lead, though we are coining fewer pieces of silver than we were a few years ago. Last year we turned out nearly 35,000,000 silver dollars. This seems like a large number, though it is but a little more than one dollar for every two inhabitants, and the people do not seem to want the silver dollars, for they continue to pile up in the treasury vaults. We coined during last year only 12,000 or 13,000 half dollars. It is an odd fact that the half dollar will not go in this country. It is an unpopular coin. We send out a lot of half dollars, and the first thing we know they are coming back again. The treasury is already loaded with them. It is eleven years since we coined any considerable number of half dollars. The quarter is a little more popular, but a very limited coinage satisfies the demand for them, too. Of dimes, on the other hand, the people cannot get enough. Last year we coined nearly a million dollars' worth, and the mints are now chiefly occupied with the little ten cent pieces. In 1887 we coined 14,757,000 worth of dimes, and thought we had more than met the demand. But the country swallows dimes as a flock of blackbirds do kernels of corn."

"Are the other minor coins equally popular?"

"The nickel and the penny are in great demand. In the last eight years we have coined no fewer than 22,000,000 nickels, and we are still turning them out at the rate of ten millions or so a year. Last year we coined nearly fifty million pennies, and the demand continues unabated. The west is beginning to take pennies and nickels, and I should not be surprised to see one coinage of cents go up to a hundred million pieces in a year."

"We are still coining gold?"

"Yes, but not in such great quantities as formerly. Gold is not very popular either with the banks or the people except in the far west. The bulk of the gold coin in this country is held on the Pacific coast. Our coinage of gold last year amounted to \$21,000,000, three-fourths of it in double eagles, and nearly all of the remainder in eagles. The five dollar, three dollar and dollar gold pieces are not in much demand, and our coinage of all three last year amounted to only \$135,000. We estimate that there is in the country about \$22,000,000 of gold coin, and last year we made a thorough effort to ascertain where that coin was. We succeeded in locating a little more than one-half of it. The treasury held \$246,000,000, national banks \$72,000,000 and other banks \$34,000,000. This leaves about \$272,000,000 unaccounted for, and this may be put down approximately as the sum deposited in the stockings of the people or in actual use in trade. Probably one-half of this is west of the Rocky mountains."

"How much money has Uncle Sam coined since he went into the business?"

"Two billions one hundred and seventeen millions of dollars. Of this nearly three-fourths has been of gold, one-fourth of silver, and a small sum (\$21,000,000) in comparison with the total, of minor coins. The greatest coinage in any one year was in 1881, when the total reached \$125,000,000. The smallest coinage in any one year was in 1815, when we ran down to \$20,000. Our government has been very consistent in its coinage, and it is really remarkable that our minting system should have been left so much undisturbed during a hundred years. The amount of gold in our gold coins has not been changed since we first began coining in 1793. The alloy has been changed, but not the amount of pure gold. Double eagles were not coined till 1850, but they have since been very popular. The gold dollar was not coined till 1849, and the three dollar piece not till 1854. This has never been a popular coin, and only 500,000 of them have been made altogether. The first year's coinage of the Republic brought forth gold eagles and half eagles, then dollars, half dollars and half eagles. The quarter dollar and the dime were added the next year. From 1836 to 1840 no silver dollars were coined, the half dollar being then the favorite. In 1837 the mints began turning out silver three cent pieces, and more than a million dollars of them were coined before public opinion, twenty years later, called a halt. Of that other abomination, the silver twenty cent piece, 260,000 were coined in 1876 and 1877. Then that was stopped. In 1793 the government began coining cents and half cents. Of the latter only 40,000 were coined altogether, the last piece of that denomination being made in 1857. The two cent piece was started in 1864, and in five or six years about \$200,000 of them were turned out. None have been made since 1872. The three cent piece was started in 1865, and the ever popular nickel started in 1866. I have here mentioned all the coins ever turned out of our mints, excepting the trade dollar, and you can see that our coinage has not been of very extensive variety. We have variety enough, and what we silver is some new designs, and if congress will give us authority I propose to ask the artists of the country to compete for prizes to be offered for the best designs for the silver coins."

PRISON HELLS OF SIBERIA

Two Letters Just Received by Leo Hartman from Exiles in Siberia.

New Light on Prison Outrages—The Long Road Across Siberia—A Letter from the Prison in Oust-Kara and One from Verkholsensk.

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It is my pleasure to supply the demand for information regarding Siberian prisons by placing before my readers two letters, written by women exiled in Siberia, which I recently received. These letters present a timely addition to what became recently known concerning Siberia and an interest the greater, in that, to my belief, they are the only ones of the kind that ever reached America.

They will argue with the readers the subject of Russian Nihilism and Imperial despotism in a way and with an impartiality of which I am not capable; for, while I, as an interested party, might not be absolutely impartial, as I might view the facts in a light to suit the interests of Nihilists, of whom I am one; yet the letters from Siberia do not place their authors at such a disadvantage. They were written to the friends and relatives of the exiled women and with a tenor that leaves no doubt in their genuineness and sincerity.

One is written in Oust-Kara "Political Prison" and its author, a lady twenty-two years old, condemned to ten years at hard labor in the gold mines of that locality, judiciously left her name unsigned. It was well she did so, for, had her letter been intercepted by the Government of the Czar and her identity established, she would have been hung.

The other letter bears the date of Verkholsensk, a settlement on the river Lena, in Eastern Siberia. Its author, also a woman, and but three years older than her fellow sufferer, is undergoing a sentence of twenty years at hard labor. She signed it with a fictitious name of V. Alexandrova, by which she is known only to her friends.

Eastward from St. Petersburg for nearly five thousand miles the great Siberian highway runs across the boundless prairies of European and Asiatic Russia, to the lake of Baikal on the Western border of the Transbaikalian province of Siberia; and only one comparatively insignificant range of Ural mountains—the dividing line between Europe and Asia—disturbs the level of the vast domain of the Czar. This is the road by which the exiled Nihilists are conveyed under heavy guard to their destination in the province of Transbaikalia.

It takes them two and often three years to reach the city of LaKontik, the capital of the province. Likewise, it takes two, three, and even more years for a letter of a Nihilist located in the province to reach Europe; for the safety of the exiles and their friends and relations demand that they should be forwarded not by mail, in which case they are exposed to the scrutiny of the unscrupulous Prussian officials, but through unofficial channels, which, although slow, present a greater safety. Such was the way the letters came to me. On their way they changed many hands before they could be entrusted to the safe hands of the British and United States mail. They traveled for over three years, as the date upon them—August 28, 1886—proves; and yet they possess the freshness of the latest news. The readers will undoubtedly remember that all the recent cable news of which I spoke before, pertained to events in Siberia which occurred also three years ago.

OST KARA, Aug. 28, 1886.

My Dear Friend: Since the order of Louis Melikoff began to be enforced our situation became actually desperate, so much so that Radin, our friend at Lower Kara, took his life by poisoning; Simonofsky followed him, and Mary Kovalsky became hopelessly demented. She is with us, however, and the ceaseless maniacal cries and the distortions of the face of our demented friend fairly bid us all to lose our reason. The secret order, moreover, affected our situation.



BRUTALITY TO FEMALE PRISONERS.

nation in more than one way—it left us without the aid of our friends and relations, while the prison food is utterly unwholesome and insufficient. Already acute and chronic catarrh and scurvy are common to all of us.

Our daily labors consist of cleaning the prison wards, scrubbing, washing, sewing and cooking, and once each day we are unlocked for half an hour. We go to the prison-yard, and, passing between two lines of soldiers, we reach a wood-yard. Here we load ourselves with firewood and return to prison. The treatment accorded to us by the prison officials is rough and insulting. From the commandant down to the warder and his assistants—all the officials look for an excuse to strike a blow or to curse in a way I can not repeat. Four years am I here confined, yet I am unable to harden my nerves and to get used to the abuse without the deepest emotion. To give you an example of the abuse let me narrate to you an occurrence of an average temper:

The day before last Mary Kovalsky (demented) and Armfeldt were escorted to the bath house. On their way they halted in front of the store house requesting the permission of their guard

to get some clean clothing—they had the permission of the commandant procured beforehand. "Forward, march!" commanded the guard officer in reply to their request. "But!" exclaimed Armfeldt, "the commandant—" At this moment a blow from a soldier knocked her down. With butt end of their rifles the soldiers began to batter her on the head, arms and back. Bruised and bleeding, she screamed at the top of her voice; we heard her; we rushed to the windows. You may perceive the effect of the scene we witnessed. Blood rushed to our heads; we lost self-command; our